



**U.S. Embassy's  
Sixth Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civil Rights  
Essay Contest New Providence Winner**

**Cedric Munroe**  
**Doris Johnson Sr. High School**  
**Grade 12**

“It’s not a past tense for me. Dr. King continues to have an impact on my life, as he does upon the lives of many people in the world. A dream never dies. I’m trying to be that fair person, that kind, generous and courageous person, that loving person that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was and encouraged us to become.” - *Maya Angelou.*

Marguerite Ann Johnson, more commonly known as Dr. Maya Angelou, was born on April 4, 1928. She is a known actress, activist, poet, author and an Academy of Achievement inductee. This “Phenomenal Woman” has inspired many persons. She has inspired me to write poetry of my own, a few of which have won awards. Dr. Angelou fights for civil rights. She advocates equality among all races and same sex marriages, and motivates teen mothers and neglected persons to surmount their struggles.

Maya Angelou has traveled the world teaching moral values and virtues. She has been the voice for those who don’t have the courage to speak. Dr. Angelou

volunteers her time at high schools around America to divulge her life experiences. Having been a teenage mother, she knows the cruel pejoratives that premature mothers face. She has dedicated a portion of her autobiography, "*I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*" to them. Dr. Angelou has counseled teen mothers, built their courage and motivated them to aspire for transcendence.

In addition, Dr. Angelou has focused on neglect within the black community. After witnessing blacks fighting blacks and committing adultery, she perceives these as "acts of negligence." To this end, Dr. Angelou has spent much time educating blacks of the importance of being their brother's keeper. Through her lectures at Wake Forest University, she has encouraged youths to be concerned for the welfare of others.

Furthermore, Dr. Angelou is an advocate of same sex marriage. Dr. King's teachings are evident in the works of Dr. Angelou. In order to eradicate this prejudice in society, Dr. Angelou has used her poetry to make others tolerant and more accepting of the gay community. She has recited her poem, "*Still I Rise*" at same sex conferences across America. Presently, she fights for the rights of gays with the intention of abolishing discrimination against them.

Both Dr. King and Dr. Angelou have inspired me to be a difference maker. I have made it my goal to make the world a more peaceful place. At my school, I'm the Vice President of the Interact Club. We've donated money and labor to the needy, and also comforted the elderly. My student council body and I have implemented a peer-tutoring program, to work with the academically challenged at my school. Additionally, as a prefect, I have taken time to talk with my male peers about anger management. Dr. Angelou's words, "You may encounter many defeats but you must never be defeated" serves as my motto. Dr. King inspired Dr. Maya Angelou, and she has inspired me. Now, I must inspire my peers to personify Dr. King's morals.

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